Loss of fruits and vegetables in FPI sector

354 SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that large quantity of fruits and vegetables perish in the country due to non-availability of proper processing facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the quantity of fruits/vegetables that perish daily due to lack of processing facilities;

(c) whether Government have chalked out/propose to chalk out any scheme to augment processing facilities in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made/likely to be made as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (d) Wastage of fruits & vegetables is reported to be about 22% occurring at various stages of handling after harvesting like inadequate post harvest infrastructure, lack of cold chain facilities, poor handling techniques by farmers, lack of proper storages etc. In order to increase level of processing of fruits & vegetables, Government has exempted fruits & vegetable products from payment of excise duty. Recently in 2004-05, the Government has allowed under Income Tax Act, a deduction of 100% of profit for five years and 25% of profits for the next five years in case of new agro processing industries set up to process, preserve and package fruits and vegetables. Plan schemes have also been formulated and implemented to provide financial assistance for establishment, expansion and modernization of food processing units, creation of infrastructure, support for R&D, human resource development besides other promotional measures to encourage development of food processing industries. So far Government has sanctioned assistance for establishment/expansion/ modernization of 577 FPI units including the units engaged in processing of fruits & vegetables.